



WaterSaver Newsletter

July 2012

Smart Irrigation Month



With Arizona's proclamation of July as Smart Irrigation Month, Governor Brewer keeps efficient irrigation front and center in the minds of homeowners, landscapers, lawmakers and all Arizonans.

This is a great time to familiarize yourself with your irrigation controller. One of the most common mistakes when programming the device is confusing "run time" and "start time" which are two completely different functions.

- Run Time - determines how long each individual zone will run.
- Start Time - determines when a specific program (usually A, B or C) will turn on. Your irrigation system will only turn on if you have a start time associated with that particular program.

The common misconception is that each zone must have a separate start time, leading to multiple irrigation cycles or "stacking." For example, a lawn area with seven sprinkler zones will only need one start time because the timer will run all of the stations assigned to that program in sequence.

Run times vary with the type of system you have. For instance, drip systems will need a longer run time than sprinkler systems.

Follow this link for more information on [programming your timer](#). If you're struggling with setting your controller, give us a call at 480-782-3583 to schedule a free consultation with one of our conservation experts.

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Upcoming Events

- July**
[Flashlight Tours at the Desert Botanical Garden](#)
- July**
[Pick Your Own Peaches at Apple Annes Orchard](#)
- July**
[Gourd Art Class, Bird Walk & Tree Tour at Boyce Thompson Arboretum](#)
- July 21**
[Wildflower Walk at Flagstaff Arboretum](#)

See Fall class schedule at www.chandleraz.gov/water



July

Our last significant rain was on March 18th, more than 90 days ago. Watering frequencies are the same as for June unless we get some rain. Monsoon rains are localized, so a rain gauge can be helpful. If you receive at least one-half inch of rain, skip an irrigation cycle. Use the 'off' or 'rain' setting on your controller to stop the watering cycle without disturbing your programs. These recommendations are for plants that are established in the landscape (in the ground about 2 years).

Ask A Garden Goddess



I planted cantaloupe and watermelons this year. How do I tell when they're ripe?

Lawn watering:

- Summer grass (Bermuda) - once every 3 days
- Overseeded cool season grass (rye) - grass dies out

If trees and shrubs are on the same valve:

- Desert Adapted - once every 14 days
- High Water Use - once every 7 days

Tree watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 16 days
- High Water Use - once every 8 days

Shrub watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 12 days
- High Water Use - once every 5 days

Groundcover and vine watering:

- Desert Adapted - once every 12 days
- High Water Use - once every 4 days

Cacti and succulent watering - once every 21 days

Annuals watering - once every 2-3 days

Reduce your landscape watering 30 to 50 percent by adjusting your irrigation each season. ["Landscape Watering by the Numbers: A Guide for the Arizona Desert"](#) will help you determine how much water to apply and how long to run your system. Request a free copy at www.chandleraz.gov/water or visit the interactive Web site at <http://www.wateruseitwisely.com>

Bonus tip: Use a coffee can or other container instead of a rain gauge as long as it has a flat bottom, vertical sides, and is deep enough so drops of water won't splash out. Stabilize the container and place in the open so trees, fences or sprinklers do not affect the amount of water that will accumulate. After a rain, simply use a ruler to measure.

On most cantaloupes, the rind color may turn from tan or green to a pale yellow. If it is ripe, it will detach or "slip" from the vine when only a little pressure is applied by just rolling it on the ground.

For watermelons watch for dieback of the 'curlicue' tendrils on the vine opposite the stem of the melon and the other tendrils from the melon back to the base of the vine. Many folks listen for a hollow sound when tapping the melon with a knuckle.

Email your question to GardenGoddess@chandleraz.gov

Water Wise Tips



Grandpa always said "Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance". With our monsoon season underway, we may just get a chance to test equipment like rain sensors.

A rain sensor is designed to override your irrigation controllers cycle program, shutting the water off during and after adequate rainfall has been received. The most popular sensor uses a hygroscopic disk made of a synthetic material similar to cork that expands when it gets wet. The wetter it gets, the more it expands. The expanded disk triggers the switch after a preset amount of rain has fallen. The controller resumes its regular schedule once the disk in the sensor dries out. The [rain sensor](#) should be set to shut the system off once a quarter-inch of rainfall has occurred and should be mounted in an unobstructed area outdoors.

Some of the newest technologies in rain sensors are the wireless types. These sensors communicate by sending a signal to a module connected to your controller. There is even a rain sensor available that has a rain delay program, allowing you to suspend your watering schedule after it rains up to four days.

This equipment saves money and water by not watering when it rains. Rain sensors can be installed by homeowners or irrigation professionals and are available wherever irrigation supplies are sold.

Plant of the Month

Landscape Palm Trees

Palm trees are well known to give an oasis effect to any landscape. Most are graceful, dramatic plants that add dimension and style. Although many varieties can be grown in our landscapes, only the California Fan Palm (*Washingtonia filifera*) is native to the southwest deserts of North America.



Closely related to grasses, yuccas, agaves and bulbs, palms grow a wide, shallow, spreading net of fibrous roots and require only modest care to thrive, even in desert conditions. Established desert species need deep watering once every other week in the summer and every three to four weeks in the winter. Tropical varieties (like the Queen Palm) need water more often.

Remember that tall palms will eventually require pruning by a professional while others varieties grow slow enough that most homeowners can do this task themselves. Follow this link to read more about [pruning palms](#).



For more landscape choices and design ideas to help you create a vibrant, attractive, colorful low water use landscape try ["Water Wise Landscaping in Chandler"](#).

Water Conservation E-News

This monthly newsletter will help you create stunning landscapes that use less water. Each issue is packed with personalized watering advice, notices about upcoming events, timely tips to maintain a healthy landscape, plus ways to reduce your water bill. Read past issues here - [WaterSaver newsletter](#).

[Sign-Up Now](#)

Sincerely,
Water Conservation Staff

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Questions or comments? We want to hear from you! Contact us at conserve@chandleraz.gov

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